

# **Statement from the Society of Independent Theatres (SIT) supporting a request for Government financial intervention in light of the current Coronavirus crisis**

Independent, Fringe and Pub venues are the engine room of British theatre. In every community across our country, within countless small theatres, studios, halls, cellars, churches, pubs and even attics, theatrical events are continuously unfolding. It is in these venues that both emerging and established artists grow in a supportive, nurturing environment. This often happens without any form of central Government or local authority support.

Directors, designers, composers, technicians and performers are constantly working at the theatre coal-face that our venues provide, creating new work and starting new careers. Over the past fifty years, many of the UK's leading theatre creatives and performers have started their careers in independent theatres. These include: Jez Butterworth, Meera Syal, Roy Alexander Weise, Stephen Daldry, Miranda Hart, James Graham, Paapa Essiedu, Katie Mitchell, Rufus Norris, Nick Mohammed, Rosie Jones, Sudha Bhuchar, Stephen Fry, Richard Curtis, Alan Bennett, Emma Thompson Jon Brittain and Mischief Theatre. The British film and television industries also benefit from this huge pool of theatrical practitioners who started on our stages.

As well as being a launch pad for West End, national touring, and international productions, our venues have a very loyal and local audience base who enjoy the close-up atmosphere and interaction that only intimate spaces can provide.

Small theatre venues are vital to the performing arts. The Society of Independent Theatres know the loss of such venues would be a disaster for the cultural life of the nation. We are therefore campaigning for financial support until the curtains can rise again.

**Please find attached the figures from a recent survey of our members. These demonstrate the enormous contribution our sector makes to the economy both financially and from the number employed. Our figures also reveal the huge contribution to the local economies of the immediate areas surrounding each venue. These figures only represent the fifty-four members of SIT. The statistics should be doubled to account for the remainder of the UK's small theatrical venues.**

SIT Board of Directors - 28<sup>th</sup> May 2020 - [www.sitgb.org](http://www.sitgb.org)